

VIRGINIA HOUSING COMMISSION

November 29, 2006
Norfolk Marriott Waterside Hotel
1:00 P.M.

Members Present:

Delegate Terrie L. Suit
Delegate Robert D. Hull
Delegate Daniel W. Marshall, III
Senator Mamie Locke
Senator Mary Margaret Whipple
Mr. F. Andrew Heatwole
Mr. T. K. Somanath

Delegate Terrie Suit called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. She explained that each work group would give a brief report and that the Commission would then vote on whether or not any proposed legislation would be endorsed by the Housing Commission.

Delegate Hull (in the absence of the Chair, Senator Watkins) began by giving the overview for the Building Codes and Accessibility Work Group. He said that the two major areas of study for the interim, carbon dioxide detectors and sprinklers, both had more information to be ascertained about them before substantive bills could be passed; and therefore no legislation would be endorsed for this Session. The International Building Code Association has yet to make a decision on requiring carbon dioxide detectors and the Work Group had voted to wait on the industry report before making a call on placing the detectors in residential dwelling units.

The Work Group felt that the sprinkler issue still required more study. The discussion was about whether or not a law should require sprinkler systems in buildings over seven stories when they are rehabilitated. Many speakers, local and national, gave testimony, over a series of meetings, about the affect on restoring buildings in Virginia, costs and safety issues.

Delegate Hull gave the Commission members copies of his proposed legislation dealing with increased sanctions for landlords when there are occupancy limit violations in dwelling units. The Work Group had heard from several speakers during the interim and thoroughly debated the issue. Delegate Hull presented the bill but chose to submit it as an individual legislator instead of asking for the Commission's endorsement.

Delegate Suit read the report of the study on Senate Bill 145 (Deeds, 2005) into record for the Commission. (A copy is available on the website)

Delegate Marshall gave an overview of the Housing and Affordability Work Group's issues. The Housing Trust Fund was discussed in this work group and the full Commission voted to put forth a bill endorsing a Trust Fund and using a portion of the recordation tax to provide a funding source. The bill is to be drafted to mirror the Housing Trust Fund bill put forward by the Commission in 2005.

The other issue of focus for this work group was the Virginia Residential Property Act; Discloser/Disclaimer bill. Former Delegate Chip Dicks spoke to this work group twice explaining the origins of a disclaimer and the need for a more up-to-date bill reflective of the current housing market needs in Virginia. The Commission voted to endorse the Virginia Residential Property Act; Discloser/Disclaimer bill.

Senator Whipple told of the controversial flag debate with the condominium associations and explained (with a handout of the United States Flag Act) that the proposed legislation would put Virginia in compliance with the Federal Act which allows the American flag to be flown as long as the time, place and manner are appropriate for the complex. The full commission endorsed this proposed legislation. She then spoke about the pros/cons concerning political signs and stated that Delegate Cosgrove had suggested during the Work Group's meeting that this particular issue might be solved more appropriately in a court of law, and the work group agreed. She then explained the bill on condominium conversions. The full commission, after a complete discussion, recommended removing the bill portion listing low-income as a preferred category but endorsed the amended bill allowing elderly and disabled individuals to be included in the categories of persons a Housing Authority or non profit Housing Corporation could rent to after acquiring the property from the developer.

Delegate Suit gave an overview of the October policy meeting where VHDA gave a presentation of its Policy Stakeholder Work Group's findings. The following are the Guiding Principles the work group espoused:

- Housing should be a high state, local and regional priority,
- All groups should have fair access to quality housing choices,
- Increased affordability should be a policy priority,
- Homeownership should build long-term financial security,
- New design and building practices should be encouraged, and
- Sound policy depends on information and analysis.

The Commission voted to adopt the Guiding Principles as a basis for the state housing policy.

Delegate Suit thanked the Commission members for their dedication and hard work and adjourned the meeting at 3:00 P.M.